FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LOA - 2016

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: What is an LOA?

A: The Letter of Agreement (LOA) took the place of the Letter of Understanding effective January 1, 2014.

Q: Where can I find the LOAs and other documents?

A: LOA 2016 documents are available on the DHS website link: http://tn.gov/humanservices/article/dhs-vr-loa

Q: How do I apply for a Letter of Agreement?

A: Complete the Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) General Application along with the Letter of Agreement, attachments, and required documents as noted in the application package. These documents should all be submitted by email in a PDF format to LOA.Application.DHS@tn.gov mailbox by the timelines below.

Q: Do I need to have three staff members to get an LOA?

A: Only, if you are providing services under the Supported Employment (SE) attachment. Every agency should have adequate staff to provide the services that they have agreed to provide, but SE is the only attachment with a required minimum number of staff.

Q: Do the letters of reference required to be submitted with the LOA application apply to the individual staff members or the agency?

A: The letters of reference should cover the agency/CRP itself, **not** the individual staff members and should attest to the CRP's ability to provide a quality service.

Q: Does a CRP have to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)?

A: No, CRPs are not required to be accredited by CARF. But, any accreditation a CRP has should be included in their application.

Q: What is the required computer format for the LOA Application?

A: The application must be in PDF format.

Q: Do staff have to take all the quizzes?

A: No. Staff are required to successfully complete the quizzes for each LOA service they will provide.

Q: Do the Executive Director and other Administrative staff need to submit documentation such as resume', national background check, etc., for the LOA application?

A: No. Only those staff who will provide LOA services to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients.

Q: Are the Administrative staff and Executive Director required to do the training module and quiz?

A: No. If they do not directly work with clients it is recommended, but not required for the Executive Director to complete the quizzes.

Q: Is there going to be training on how to complete VR forms? Also, sample(s) of completed reporting forms would be helpful for all providers.

A: Vendor/Provider forums may be scheduled this year to discuss the completion of the forms. In addition, CRP staff may contact their Program Support Specialist for technical assistance as needed.

Q: Are continuing education hours required for those who were hired in 2015?

A: For staff members who were hired during 2015 only the New Hire Training documentation is required. Ongoing training checklists are not required for those individuals (LOA renewal checklist, Section F). It is recommended for staff hired in 2015 to do continuing education.

Q: What are the due dates of client Monthly Progress Reports, VR Program Reports, and End of the Services Reports?

A: All client Monthly Progress Reports, except the SE Monthly Stabilization Report will be due on the 5^{th} of the following month. VR Monthly Program Reports are due the 15^{th} of the following month. End of Services reports are due 10 business days from completion of services such as Trial Work Experience, Vocational Assessments, Job Readiness, Supported Employment Consultation Report.

Q: How should the application package be submitted to the LOA.Application.DHS@tn.gov mailbox?

A: Whenever possible, please submit your application package in one email. Depending on the size of the file, it might need to be broken up into more than one email. If that is the case, please indicate the number of emails (1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc.) just to be sure we know we received everything you sent.

Q: Can you clarify the insurance requirement for staff transporting clients in agency vehicles?

A: Any staff who transports VR clients while providing LOA services must submit proof of vehicle insurance. Insurance may be individual insurance or it may be covered in the CRP's insurance. The CRP's insurance certificate will indicate whether vehicles are covered and whether the policy covers private vehicles and/or agency/CRP vehicles.

Q: Don't staff really only have 10 months to get the continuing education credits since the application for the next year is due in October?

A: Staff has until the end of December 2015 to complete the required continuing education training. Submit your LOA application and include the training sheets. As staff complete the required hours (before the end of December), the Provider will submit their updated training sheets.

Q: How long are background checks good for?

A: Background checks should be national (not local or statewide). Background checks for new staff must be completed within the past 12 months. Background checks for current staff must have been completed within the past 36 months. For all staff, new or returning, the background check documentation must be included in the application package.

Q: If I have an LOA for a certain service, can I add another service later in the year?

A: All services the CRP intends to provide should be included in the initial application. CRPs cannot add services during the year, unless the Division identifies at some other point a need for additional services and accepts applications.

Q: Can I still apply if I have staff members that have not completed the required 10 hours of training?

A: Yes, when you complete the application indicate with an asterisk the staff member's name, date of training and location that they will attend. You will also need to send Janie.Hadley@tn.gov an email with documentation after the staff has completed the training, so your application can be updated. Please remember to send Ms. Hadley an updated staff roster.

Q: When will the training videos be available?

A: They are on the website now.

Q: Who is required to complete the LOA on-line training quizzes?

A: The staff that will be providing services to the clients are required to complete the on line training.

Q: Which job coaches should be listed on the LOA?

A: Any job coaches that are providing VR services under the LOA should be listed and reported to VR and they should meet the LOA requirements. Any staff changes during the year (reduction and addition) must be added to the staff roster and reported to VR by contacting Janie.Hadley@tn.gov .

Q: Are applications needed for each Region?

A: It depends on the size of the agency, management, staff and a number of factors. Please consult with your Program Support Specialist if you have any questions. In general, an agency serving multiple Regions in the same geographic area would not need to submit separate applications.

Q: What is the process for existing CRPs that are interested in providing new additional services?

A: Indicate the additional service on the General LOA document and provide the documentation from the New Vendor Checklist that applies to the new service.

Q: Would reviewing the training module and taking the quiz be considered as continuing education hours.

A: No

Q: For the transition from Authorization and Invoices (A&I) to Vendor Purchase Orders (VPOs), how will the transition take place? Will the current A&Is we received have to be canceled and reissued?

A: VR has not been given specific guidance. Additional information will be disseminated when we have clear guidance on how the transition will be implemented.

Q: Are the forms/reporting forms available?

A: The LOA website has placeholders for the forms and reports. They are “Coming soon!”

Q: We hired a new staff member in 2015 that came to us from a different agency. What documentation do we need to submit with the application package (just the New Hire training sheet or do they need continuing education hours also even though they were not with us during most of the year)?

A: Staff who are new to your agency in 2015 must provide documentation of completion of New Hire training. They are not required to document ongoing training.

Q: How many opportunities does staff have to pass the training module quizzes?

A: Two (2). If they do not pass after 2 attempts, contact your LOA Program Support Specialist.

VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT SERVICES

Q: Do **new** CRPs need to submit sample reports when applying to provide assessment services?

A: Yes. The CRP will need to turn in with their application **sample reports** with redacted/removed identifying information of the client for the assessments they are selecting to provide.

Q: What educational level is required for someone to conduct vocational evaluations?

A: The educational level for vocational evaluations has not changed. A Bachelor’s Degree and training or related experience in vocational evaluation is the minimum requirement.

Q: Will the Vocational Assessment be done in our facility or on site?
A: The Basic Assessment/Vocational Evaluation is a facility based assessment. The Job Sampling, Job Shadowing and Integrated Work Site Assessments are community based assessments. The Work Readiness Assessment may be completed in a facility or community based setting.

Q: The attachment states school records will be provided. Who will get those?
A: The VR Counselor should provide the information with the referral, if it is applicable.

Q: Work Readiness versus Basic Assessment/ Vocational Evaluation. What is the difference?

A: The Work Readiness Assessment is conducted in a facility or job site and is up to 10 days. It is an assessment of the client’s soft skills in a work or simulated work setting.

The Basic Assessment/ Vocational Evaluation is shorter and is usually paper/pencil testing and work samples.

Q: Vocational Adjustment and Work Readiness are similar aren't they?

A: The Work Readiness is an evaluation tool. Vocational Adjustment is a training service. The Work Readiness Assessment helps identify weaknesses and limitations in soft skills and other areas. Once these limitations are identified the client may be referred for Vocational Adjustment Training and begin to work on improving those areas needed for employment.

Q: Can you do more than one (1) assessment site for the Integrated Work Site Assessment?

A: The assessment is designed to answer specific questions and provide information to the VR Counselor to help make case service decisions. Multiple assessment sites may be used but payment is not based on the number of sites used. Payment is for the overall assessment.

Q: What is the difference between Integrated Work Site Assessment (IWSA) and Trial Work Experience (TWE)?

A: The purpose of the IWSA (and other vocational assessments) is to provide the VR Counselor with information to help determine an appropriate employment goal and the services required to attain that goal. The purpose of the TWE is to determine if the client is able to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome based on the severity of their disability. The TWE helps determine **IF** the client can benefit from services. If a client can benefit from VR services, the other assessments help determine **WHICH** services are required.

TRIAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Q: Do you have to be a Supported Employment provider in order to provide Trial Work Experience services?

A: No. Trial Work Experience is a separate service and you do not have to be an SE Provider in order to provide Trial Work Experiences.

JOB READINESS/JOB PLACEMENT

Q: If a client agrees to take a job for less than minimum wage will that count as a successful placement?

A: To count as a successful placement, the client must earn at least minimum wage.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Q: If a Provider is not a DIDDS agency then will there be monies for Follow Along support?

A: When a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) signs the LOA they are committing to provide follow along services for the VR client after the case is successfully closed at the end of the 90 day period. CRPs may explore other funding options to assist with the cost of providing this service (i.e. becoming an Employment Network and the client has the option of assigning the ticket to work to the Provider after their case is closed with VR, PASS Plan through the Social Security Administration). There may be an occasion where the client's case needs to be reopened with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). If the client's case needs to be reopened the Provider and client would contact the local VR office to speak with the assigned VR Counselor. The case may be reopened in post-employment or a new case opened depending on the circumstances. This determination will be made by the VR Counselor.

Q: What will the program look like for SE follow along services that are not provided by DIDDS?

A: The vendor makes the commitment to provide follow along after the VR case is closed in Status 26 (successful closure working 90 days). The vendor must have at least 2 contacts with the client per month. Providers are encouraged to become an Employment Network (EN) with SSA's Ticket to Work program. Providers who provide SE services are required to do the follow along.

Q: Are the Transition School to Work students still under follow along until they are age 22?

A: We do not have the final Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act regulations yet. The follow along requirements for SE remain unchanged.

Q: With Ticket to Work (TTW), the client assigns their ticket to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR); so how will that help us?

A: Once VR writes the client's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) the client's ticket is assigned to VR. Once the case is closed with VR the client can reassign their ticket to any Employment Network (EN) provider. By becoming an EN your agency may be able to receive funds from SSA for services provided after the VR case is closed.

Q: Are Job Coaches required to complete the SE training quizzes?

A: No. Employment Specialists must complete the Supported Employment (SE) training module and quiz. Job Coaches do not have to complete the SE quiz, but must complete the Job Coach training module and quiz.

Q: If our agency is providing Supported Employment in three (3) different areas of the State (East, West, Middle) should we turn in three separate LOAs for Supported Employment?

A: Yes. There will need to be three qualified staff in each Region/area.

JOB COACHING

Qs: Are the rates based on the qualifications of the individual actually providing the job coaching service, not on CRP qualifications as a whole? The fees/rate of pay is **not** based on the client's Priority Category (PC) level correct? Are the Job Coach LOA attachment and fees separate/different than SE job coaching?

A: Yes is the answer to all three questions.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Q: What is the process for requesting a Special Services attachment?

A: Services not covered under other LOA attachments will be covered by the Special Services' attachment. The CRP should use the Special Services template document to provide a description of their proposed services. Services should be in keeping with the needs in the region.

Q: Due to the budget are Special Services going to be funded?

A: We are not aggressively seeking vendors for Special Services; however, if the services are needed in the area, we would review it. Talk to the Regional Supervisor and your area's Program Support Specialist to be sure the service is needed in that area.

2016 LOA TIMELINE

Oct. 30	**Last day to submit renewal applications**
Nov. 6	**Last day to submit new vendor applications**
Dec. 17	**Application reviews complete**
Dec. 18	**List of approved vendors announced**
Dec. 31	**All Current (2015) LOAs expire**
Jan. 1	**Revised LOAs take effect for year 2016**